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SUBJECT: HUGO CHAVEZ' MAY 9 ALO PRESIDENTE SPEECH

1. The following is a summary of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez' May 9 Alo Presidente program. Chavez' marathon speeches, of three to five hours, increasingly contain accusations of U.S. interference in domestic affairs and conspiracy to overthrow his government. This 191st Alo Presidente was delivered at the Barinas Maternity Hospital in Barinas, Barinas state. Topics included U.S./Venezuelan relations, in particular, the Iraqi prisoner scandal and U.S. government policy on Cuba. Other topics were the capture of paramilitaries on Roberto Alonso's hacienda; the "enemies of the state," including broadcast and print media outlets Globovision, Venevision, RCTV, "El Nacional," and "El Universal;" and the inauguration of the Barinas hospital.

Iraqi Prisoner Scandal

2. "Venezuela condemns the United States Government for the violations of human rights in Iraq," said Chavez. He called the photos of American soldiers abusing the human rights of the Iraqi prisoners "heinous" and "savage" and asked the international community to judge President George W. Bush's "anti-terrorist war."

"This is called terrorism and, even more, savagery," said President Chavez when he showed the photos of a pile of naked Iraqis before American soldiers in a prison in Baghdad.

"It is an aberrant thing, they are piled up naked, as if it were a sexual witches' Sabbath, and a woman soldier was enjoying it. That is a sick woman," said Chavez.

"They will be accountable for these war crimes and, also, for these heinous photos. Let the world be the judge! This is Mr. Bush's war. These are not rumors, these are photos of smiling faces of the American soldiers," he said.

The President stated that the photos have not only provoked outrage in the Arab world, but also "in the entire world, because we, most human beings, are neither sick nor inhumane."

Chavez also said that the abuses of the Iraqi prisoners represent a "reason" why the "U.S. government did not want to sign the Rome Statute...through which war crimes and crimes against humanity are punished."

The President also accused the Venezuelan media of not releasing the abuses of the Iraqi prisoners. "They don't want to mess with their masters because those media outlets are paid by them and they totally serve the empire."

U.S., No; Cuba, Yes

3. Cuba: On behalf of the Venezuelan government and people, Chavez rejected with "firmness, courage and Latin American fraternity" the hardening of the U.S. administration's strategy, led by George W. Bush, on Cuba.

"How does the U.S. government morally condemn Cuba for violating human rights?" asks Chavez, reaffirming his "support" to the Havana government. "We regret that there are governments of this hemisphere that subject themselves to the strategy of the empire, as Fidel Castro said on May 1," said Chavez.

"What Fidel says is true. There are governments that submit themselves to the strategies of the United States . . . sometimes because they are pressured, because they depend on an IMF loan or because they want to be praised," said Chavez. "They want to condemn Cuba for

alleged violations of human rights, but nobody condemns

the United States for its violations of human rights in Iraq," commented Chavez, again referring to the recent photos of Iraqi prisoners being tortured by American soldiers, which he termed "a horrendous act."

Chavez said that Cuba asked the very same United Nations Human Rights Commission that condemned the island as a result of pressure from the United States to investigate the violations the U.S. commits on its base located in Guantanamo, Cuban territory, for example, the disappearance of prisoners. However, due to this UN organ's failure to act, the Caribbean country decided to withdraw the request.

"Washington's imperial government once again threatens the sovereignty of Cuba, through, for instance, the intervention of its communications, of the broadcast of Radio Marti, instigating the overthrow and murder of its president, Fidel Castro. This is State terrorism."

Chavez also said that the U.S. restriction on the number of resident Cubans in the country traveling to Cuba and on the resources they may send to their family members illustrates the new momentum in Bush's anti-Cuban strategy.

14. United States. Conditions in the United States should not permit the United States government to criticize others: 8 million children without social security

Chavez scoffed at the U.S. offer, that were a transition government be established in Cuba - something he thinks would be impossible - it would help vaccinate Cuban poor children. He suggested Bush should start that vaccination drive with his country's poor children, since the public health on the Caribbean island has progressed significantly. "According to recent figures, at least eight million American children are out of the country's health system and social security," Chavez claimed.

Chavez deplored the fact that some countries of the region submit to imperialistic plans like this one and that they don't raise their voices to condemn the atrocities the U.S. commits in Iraq.

Shapiro

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